



LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY Health Department

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Don't Let Cost Stand in Way of Back-to-School Shots

If you're struggling with how to pay for new shoes, new clothes, new school supplies, *and* your child's back-to-school shots, your local health department may at least be able to help with the vaccinations.

"Immunizations are the single best way to protect your children from serious infectious diseases," according to Karen Dobson, public health nurse supervisor with the Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department. "And immunizing individual kids also helps protect the health of our community, especially people who aren't immunized because they're too young to be vaccinated or they can't be for medical reasons."

The federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program offers vaccines at no cost for children under the age of 19 who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The child is eligible for Medicaid;
- The child has no health insurance coverage;
- The child is American Indian (as defined by the Indian Health Care Improvement Act); or
- The child has private health insurance that doesn't cover vaccines, covers only selected vaccines, or caps vaccine coverage at a certain amount.

Children whose health insurance covers the cost of immunizations aren't eligible for VFC vaccine, even if coverage isn't available because a deductible hasn't been met.

VFC vaccines can be administered by any enrolled program provider. There is usually a small fee for the administration of each dose. Ask your child's health-care provider for more information or contact an immunization nurse at the health department, 443-2584.

Children under 19 who have no insurance may also be eligible for low- or no-cost insurance through the Healthy Montana Kids Program. For more information, call Terri at the health department or visit www.hmk.mt.gov.

Certain immunizations are required for students entering kindergarten or seventh grade. Other shots are recommended for optimal health protection.

Kindergarten

- Required: Booster doses of DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis), polio, MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- Recommended: Booster doses of chicken pox and hepatitis A

Seventh Grade

- Required: A tetanus booster (Tdap, which also protects against diphtheria and pertussis, or Td) unless the child has already had one within the past five years
- Required: Two doses of MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) if not already complete at kindergarten

Pre-Teens and Teens

As kids get older they can develop risks for other diseases. Health professionals recommend that pre-teens and teenagers be vaccinated against:

- Meningitis
- Chicken pox
- Human papillomavirus
- Hepatitis A and B

College freshmen or transfer students should check with their school to find out if any shots are required before they can begin classes.

Walk-in Immunization Clinics

The health department holds walk-in immunization clinics Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 1930 Ninth Ave. No appointment is needed, and some vaccines are available on a sliding-fee scale. The department is able to bill all insurance providers.

To learn more about immunizations, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/default.htm or contact the health department at 443-2584.

The Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department's mission is to improve and protect the health of all Lewis & Clark County residents.

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